MANCHESTER AIRPORT,
ADMINISTRATION/TERMINAL BUILDING
East of Pine Island Pond, south of
North Perimeter Road
Manchester
Hillsborough County
New Hampshire

HAER No. NH-32-A

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD
National Park Service
Northeast Region
Philadelphia Support Office
U.S. Custom House
200 Chestnut Street
Philadelphia, P.A. 19106

HAER
NH
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HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

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HAER No. NH-32-A

Location: East of Pine Island Pond, south of North Perimeter Road
Manchester
Hillsborough County, New Hampshire
Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinates: 19.300860.4756460
USGS Manchester South, New Hampshire, Quadrangle

Date(s) of Construction: circa 1938

Engineer, etc.: Unknown

Present Owner(s): City of Manchester

Present Occupant(s): Cashin Aviation

Present Use: Commercial aviation offices

Significance: The Administration/Terminal Building is significant as the earliest example of airport terminal architecture in New Hampshire, and as an unusual surviving example of an American Stripped Classical Modern, transportation-related building.

Project Information: Manchester Airport, in association with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), proposes to remove three buildings associated with the airport's historic development for new construction. A memorandum of agreement outlining stipulations to mitigate adverse effects was drafted by Manchester Airport, FAA, and New Hampshire State Historic Preservation Officer (NHSHPO), and was accepted by the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation. Stipulations include recordation of the Manchester Airport Complex, Terminal Building, Brick Hangar, and Large Hangar, to Historic American Engineering Record (HAER) standards. The Public Archaeology Laboratory, Inc. of Pawtucket, Rhode Island, was retained by The Smart Associates, Environmental Consultants, Inc., on behalf of the Airport and FAA, to prepare the HAER documents.

Stephen A. Olausen, Senior Architectural Historian
Matthew A. Kierstead, Industrial Historian
The Public Archaeology Laboratory, Inc.
210 Lonsdale Avenue
Pawtucket, RI 02860

PART I. DESCRIPTIVE INFORMATION

The Administration/Terminal Building is the focal feature and most architecturally significant structure of the original Manchester Municipal Airport complex buildings. It is located on the northwest edge of the Manchester Airport, east of Pine Island Pond, between North Perimeter Road and Runway 6-24. It is the middle structure in a row of three buildings arranged to parallel to Runway 6-24 and constructed to serve the original Smith Field. They include the Brick Hangar (HAER No. NH-32-B) to the southwest, and a highly-altered, circa 1933 hangar to the northeast.

The Administration/Terminal Building is a one-story, flat-roofed, stucco-clad, concrete building with a steel and glass control tower structure on its roof. The building is roughly cruciform in plan, with overall measurements of 55 by 46 ft. The two entrances, located in the northwest and southeast elevations, are axially oriented and provide a view through the building from the street entrance to the runway. The runway (southeast) elevation is symmetrical, with a 25 ft-wide central entrance wing flanked by 15 ft-wide, set-back wings to the northeast and southwest. The low massing, as well as the fenestration and detailing of the building all emphasize its horizontality. A band of equal-height, alternating rectangular and circular windows runs around the building, with wide bands of rectangular windows with subtle concrete sills wrapping around the outside corners of the northeast and southwest wings. The tops of the walls are articulated by a frieze of three, delicate, continuous, horizontal concrete trim bands surmounted by a concrete band cornice. The street entrance is located at the center of the northwest elevation, and consists of a modern aluminum and glass replacement door sheltered by a small, flat, projecting metal hood. A bulkhead door on the northeast elevation leads to a small basement heater room.

The focal point of the building is the southeast wing with its runway entrance and glass-paned control tower. The simple, symmetrical southeast entrance consists of a corbeled, red brick surround in a slightly projecting central bay flanked by narrow vertical windows. This entrance, which opens directly onto the runway, originally contained an ornamental metal door, now replaced with an aluminum-framed, plate glass unit. This entrance opens out onto a small concrete apron flanked by low, rectangular concrete bollards and is shaded by a flat, projecting metal hood with a continuous, incised, horizontal decorative line. The square-plan control tower rises fifteen feet above the roof, directly above the southwest entrance. The tower consists of a square frame of steel corner posts and connecting lintels, clad in sheet copper sheathing, with a shallow, pyramidal, hipped roof capped with a small, square, ventilator finial. The four walls and roof are entirely glazed with original multi-pane windows with steel and copper muntins. Each side wall contains 68 panes of glass arranged in four vertical planes, with the two center planes angled out to form a subtle bay effect. A continuous, horizontal band of incised lines runs around the top of the tower walls, echoing the similar motif on the building below.

Exterior modifications include installation of modern, aluminum and plate glass doors and windows in the ground floor of the building. The interior was recently modified for office use, but still reflects its original layout. The interior includes six rooms arranged around an open, central hallway. Single offices are located in the northwest and southeast wings, and the northeast wing is divided into three smaller office spaces. A large meeting room is located in a former passenger waiting area in the southwest wing. The hallway includes a recessed area that originally accommodated a ticket counter, no longer extant. The interior has been modified with hung ceilings, replacement doors, and a linoleum tile floor.

PART II. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

The 1995 New Hampshire *Area Form for the Early Municipal Aviation Historic District* by Lynne Emerson Monroe and Kari Ann Federer recounts the history of the building as follows:

The first aviation structures at Manchester Municipal Airport were simple buildings for sheltering pilots. Aircraft were stored outside until July, 1928, when Northeast Airways constructed a hangar and inaugurated commercial passenger flights between Manchester, Concord, and Boston. The Administration/Terminal Building was built about 1938 as part of extensive Depression-era, WPA-funded improvement activities undertaken at the airport between1933 and 1940. The 1600 sq ft building originally contained two offices, a ticket counter and lobby, and a passenger waiting room. Offices were occupied by the Airport Engineer, Flight Dispatcher, and staff of the commercial Boston and Maine Airways, later Northeast Airlines, Inc. The observation tower on the roof served as the control tower after radio communication was installed. Two hangars were also constructed during this period. The first, now highly altered, was constructed about 1933, and stands northeast of the Administration/Terminal Building, and the second was the Brick Hangar, built in 1939 (HAER No. NH-32-B).

In 1939, with the onset of World War II, Granite State Airways used the Administration/Terminal Building for a civilian pilot training program. In 1940 the War Department chose Manchester for an Air Corps base, and the Manchester Municipal Airport facilities were turned over to military use for the duration of the war. After the war, the building returned to commercial use under Northeast Airlines, Inc. In 1962 the Ammon Terminal was opened, and replaced the original Administration/Terminal Building as the center of airport activity. The building has since been used for commercial offices for small plane operators, and is currently occupied by Cashin Aviation.

When it was built, the Administration/Terminal Building was described as an "attractive, modernly designed" building. It is a small, but excellent example of American Stripped Classical Modernism, a style adopted for corporate and public architecture in the mid-1930s. This style evolved from a combination of classical symmetry and several similar European Modern architectural styles, and expressed the efficiency and power of business and civic organizations. The triple, horizontal "speed lines" are a feature of the Streamlined Moderne style developed by German architect Erich Mendelsohn and inspired in part by airplane designs. Features including strong geometry, flat roofs, strip windows, and use of the color white are characteristics of the European, International Style popularized in America by industrial designer Norman Bel Geddes and others. Transportation-related structures were often designed in this style to give a feeling of speed and efficiency, and occasionally employed transportation motifs such as the round porthole window seen in this building (Wilson 1986:55, 57, 178, 182). The Administration/Terminal Building is an example of the superficial application of these details to a transportation-related structure, and is unusual for Depression-era New Hampshire, when very little building was taking place in an area that favored traditionally-based, Neo-Colonial architectural styles.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Engineering drawings:

None located.

B. Historic views:

Former airport engineer Ernest Smith of Londonderry, NH possesses a circa 1940 view of the main elevation and east side of the Administration/Terminal Building.

C. Interviews:

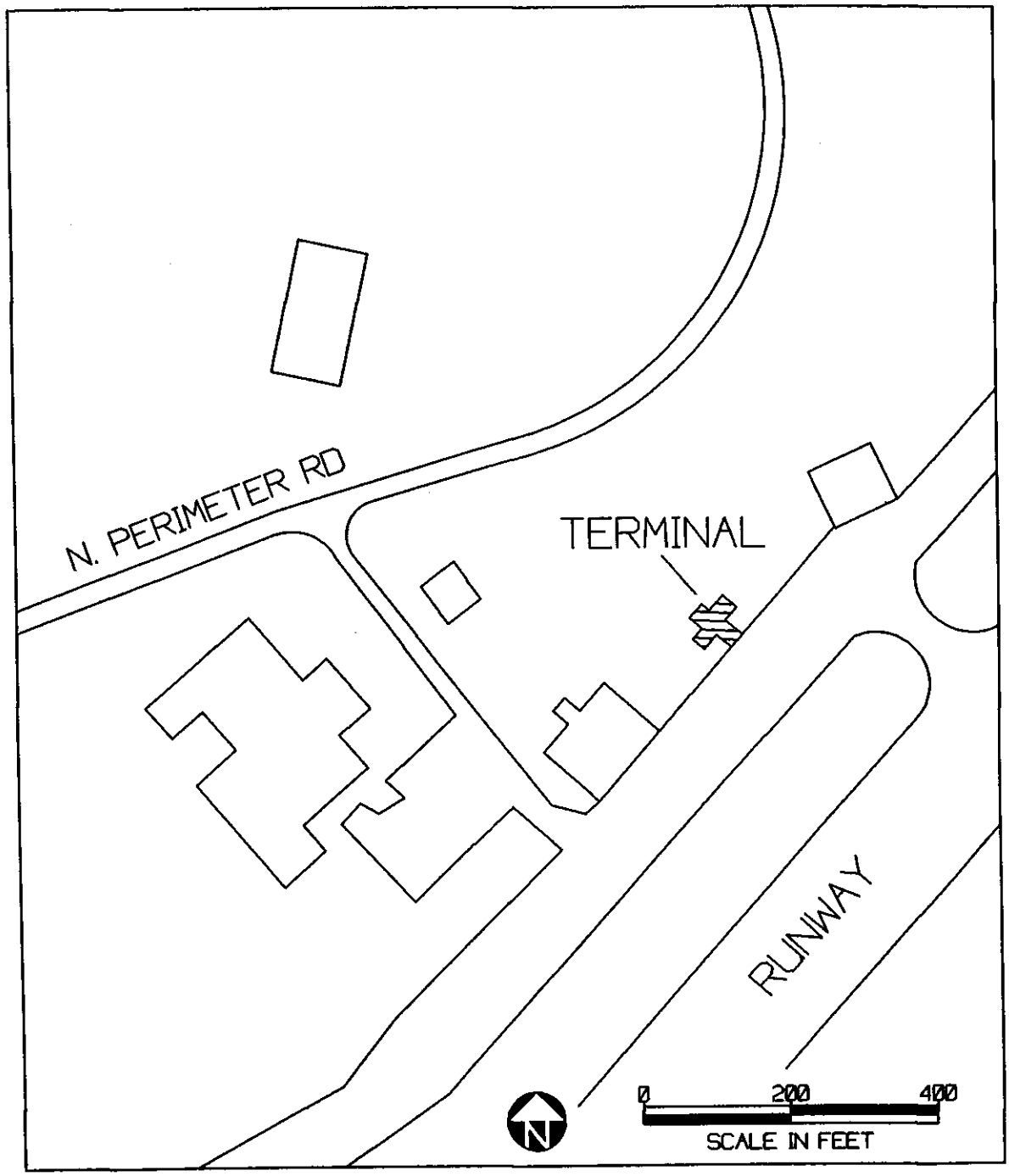
Ernest Smith, former Airport Engineer, February, 1998

D. Bibliography:

Monroe, Lynne Emerson and Kari Ann Federer
1995 *Area Form for the Early Municipal Aviation Historic District, Manchester, New Hampshire.* New Hampshire Division of Historical Resources, Concord, NH.

Wilson, Richard Guy, Diane H. Pilgrim, and Dickran Tashjian
1986 *The Machine Age in America 1918–1941.* Harry N. Abrams, New York.

Site Plan



Floor Plan